The British Press and Revolutionary Russia.

Undergraduate Research Thesis

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The Russian Revolutions of February and October 1917, precipitated some of the most sweeping and influential events of the 20th Century; the February Revolution ended over three centuries of autocratic Romanov rule while the October Revolution and the subsequent civil war ushered in the Bolsheviks and the world's first communist state. [1] These events brought equal amounts of hope and fear to both ends of the political spectrum all over the world. For left wing groups, they were a sign that the world was ready for a proletarian revolution and the ascendancy of Marxism, while for the political right, the rise of a communist Russia could only herald disaster.

The birth of a major communist power would go on to drive some of the defining conflicts of the remainder of the 20th century. However, it was the actions of those that opposed the Bolsheviks, which would lay the groundwork for much of the 20th century's East vs. West animosity. Faced with a collapsing Tsarist Russia, the Allied nations in the First World War elected to intervene in the Russian Civil War with financial aid, materiel and direct military force, on behalf of those elements opposed to Bolshevism. This intervention cast a permanent shadow on the West from the perspective of the Soviet Union and would color East-West relations for the rest of the century.

This intervention raises some interesting questions in regards to the public perception of Russia, the Revolution and the Bolsheviks. By 1918 the war correspondent had been informing the British public about conditions on the battlefield since the Crimean War.[2] The average British citizen had access to a tremendous array of papers, with a variety of political affiliations, from the right-wing *Daily Mail* to the liberal *Manchester Guardian*. Given the

[1] A note on Dates: in this paper, I will use the Julian calendar terms for the Russian Revolutions, referring to them as the February and October Revolutions. All other dates and months listed will use the Gregorian dates, unless otherwise noted.
[2] Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 1-2.

polarizing nature of the Russian Revolution, and its significance to the ongoing war against Germany, how did these newspapers react to and report its events? How did these papers convey the news of a new front in the Great War to a populace already exhausted by conflict? And what influence, if any, did the British government exert upon those papers and their coverage? The British press failed to report objectively on events in Russia. The press split upon the lines of their own political affiliation, with the more liberal papers in favor of the revolution and against intervention, and the more conservative papers decrying revolution and lauding intervention. This failure in objectivity was brought about by a lack of knowledge of the conditions within Russia, the power of the government censor to limit information flow, and the intense fears brought about by the grim strategic situation. Denied clear information and facing a potential defeat on the battlefield, it is unsurprising that the press retreated into interpretations of events, which confirmed their pre-existing biases and assumptions and, which assuaged their fears.

Historical Context

The First World War was utterly devastating for Russia. The Russian armed forces suffered more casualties than any other combatant, vast swathes of Russian territory were ravaged by advancing armies, great cities like Riga were reduced to rubble, and millions of civilians were either killed or driven from their homes. In addition to the physical damage, the disruptions caused by the industrial, and logistical needs of the largest army in the world ravaged the Russian economy. Millions of peasants and urban workers were conscripted, while those who remained struggled to fill the gap. The Russian rail network, hampered by the vast distances of the Tsarist empire and nowhere near as developed as its German equivalent, collapsed under the strain on both personnel and material, leading to massive

food shortages in the cities as it became impossible to bring the harvests in from the countryside. On top of all the privations brought about on the home-front, the army in the field, after some early successes, was outmatched at every turn by the German army. Despite bringing Russia to near-economic ruin, the war was still being lost, the Russian armies were being driven back on almost every front, the soldiers ill-equipped and poorly-fed. In 1917, as the war entered its third full year, Russia was a powder-keg of discontent and resentment waiting for a spark.[3]

That spark arrived on International Women's Day in March. The February Revolution, which began as an anti-war protest march of urban workers, ended with the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and his son, and with a simple signature in a train car, over 300 years of Romanov rule came to an end, and a four-year period of chaos and civil war -- which would see millions more Russians dead on top of the Great War itself -- began.

Over the next eight months of 1917, Russia and its people struggled with the question of what would fill the place of the fallen Tsarist regime, while at the same time trying to maintain the war effort, which had crippled that government. Two groups stepped into the power vacuum left by the Tsar. The first was the Provisional Government. Drawn predominantly from the Tsarist Duma it consisted mainly of upper class, so--called "Cadets," those who, before the Revolution, had been in favor of adopting a constitutional monarchy similar to the system practiced in Great Britain.[4] These men were in favor of keeping Russia in the war, while attempting to establish a representative system of government which would take over for the Provisional government. The second group was the Petrograd Workers and Soldiers Soviet. The Soviet, or council, drew its membership from the radical political

[3] Walter G. Moss, *A History of Russia Vol. I: To 1917* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 509-513.
[4] "History of The Movement," *Times* (London, England), Mar. 16, 1917.

classes and the lower-class workers, peasants and soldiers. This body was predominantly socialist or communist, and deeply revolutionary. They were generally in favor of an armistice and an end to the war, to begin reform of the Russian industrial, agricultural and social structures.[5]

As 1917 dragged on, the balance of power in Russia shifted more in favor of the Soviet, especially as the war continued to go badly at the front. As the strategic situation grew worse, the calls for a separate peace became more and more prevalent. After a failed coup by General Kornilov, the Army Chief of Staff, the Provisional government, under Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky, was losing what little grip it still had on the Russian people.[6] Matters came to a head when the Bolshevik party, which had come to dominate the Soviet behind its leader Vladimir Lenin and the slogan "Peace, Land and Bread," began a coup in Petrograd, now known as the October Revolution. Immortalized as the "Ten Days that Shook the World," the October Revolution left the Soviet reigning supreme in St. Petersburg.[7]

For the other Allied Great Powers the two Russian Revolutions presented a divisive quandary. On the one hand, the February Revolution was heralded as a great triumph of liberalism. In some Allied nations, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, the fall of the Tsar was met with celebration. As C. P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian* put it: "Don't you feel the Russian revolution rather stirring in your bones…"[8] The removal of the Tsarist regime eliminated for the Allies the thorny issue of justifying the Great War as a war in defense of democracy while remaining allied to the largest autocratic state in

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[5] Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo Soviet Relations 1917-1921 Vol. 1 Intervention and the War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 7-13.
[6] Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, 11-12.
[7] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 157-160.
[8] David Ayerst, *Biography of a Newspaper* (Ithaca: Cornel University Press, 1971), 401.

Europe. The October Revolution, on the other hand was much less well received by the Allies. The Bolsheviks had committed several mortal sins regarding their relationship with the Western Allies, first among them being the Bolsheviks' repeated attempts to call for a peace summit in the summer of 1917. Additionally, they released the secret treaties made by the Allied governments, which so cynically plotted the fate of the post-war world.[9] And finally, there was the announcement that the new government of Russia, as a new and separate entity, did not need to honor the massive loans made to the Tsarist government by Britain and France.[10] However, it was the Bolsheviks' clear commitment to peace at any cost, though crucial to securing domestic support within Russia, which terrified the various Allied governments and militaries. The idea that the Eastern Front, which the British and French regarded as vital to their defense of France, would collapse was unconscionable to the Anglo-French alliance.[11]

1917 was a year of grinding slaughter and ignominious defeat on almost every front for the Allies: the British assault at Ypres had drowned in the mud and blood of Flanders; meanwhile mutinies racked the decimated French army; and in Italy, the army disintegrated during the battle of Caporetto.[12] Despite the United States' entry into the war, the arrival of American troops on the continent was far off, and the idea of a complete victory for the Central Powers was not out of the question. In this moment of crisis, the Allied governments could not face the idea that the Russian Empire, which had preoccupied such a vast percentage of Germany's manpower, would ever consider leaving the fight.

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[9] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 160-161.
[10] Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, 69.
[11] Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, 4-5.
[12] Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, 19.

In response to this challenge, the allied governments, primarily driven by Great Britain, began a series of policies, which, when viewed without the context of the war, seem highly contradictory and self-defeating. Richard Ullman outlines these policies to reconstitute and Eastern Front in the first volume of his work on Anglo-Soviet relations, *Intervention and the War*. The British attempted to placate the central Bolshevik government in Moscow and Petrograd to stay in the war, through agents such as Robert Bruce Lockhart, while at the same time appealing to the various military forces, which operated in the periphery of the country. These armies were largely led by Tsarist military officers such as the former chief of the General Staff, General Denikin, the Cossack *Ataman* Semyonov, or General Kornilov the former commander-in-chief. In general terms, these men were anti-Bolshevik, though their actual goals varied on a personal basis.

These forces, such as General Denikin's army of Cossacks in the Ukraine, or the Czechoslovak Legion in Siberia, offered the British and the other Allies at least some hope of a military force on Germany's eastern frontier, either through cooperation with the Bolsheviks or by overthrowing the Bolsheviks and installing a government more amenable to the Allied cause. However, continued allied support for these armies severely impacted relations with the Bolshevik government.[13] It was hard for British agents, such as Lockhart, to legitimately say that they wished to work with the Bolsheviks against the Germans when British money and arms were flowing into the hands of anti-Bolshevist armies. This led to a distrust of the Allies in general and the British in particular.

The fact that Allied plans and hopes of recreating an Eastern Front were built largely on fantasy should also be noted. For example, the plan most heavily favored by the Allies, especially the French, would require the Japanese to land a force in Vladivostok, where it

[13] Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, 82-83.

would rally willing Russian forces and then proceed down the Trans-Siberian railway to reestablish the front in European Russia. In retrospect, this suggestion that the Japanese attempt to push a force of several hundred thousand troops down the Trans-Siberian railway and attempt to meet the Germans in European Russia seems ludicrous.[14] If there had not been major logistical problems with the suggestion, primarily the inability of the Trans-Siberian to handle the freight necessary to supply such an army, the Russian people severely distrusted the Japanese. In 1951, *The History of The Times* noted that the history of the Russo-Japanese War "made the Japanese the most unsuitable of all the Allied Powers to occupy any part of Russian territory."[15] The willingness of the Allied militaries to support and advocate such an impossible idea simply goes to show how desperate they truly were, as well as how little thought they were either able or willing to spare for the conflict.

The tipping point for the relationship between the Bolsheviks and the Allies came in January of 1918, with the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. This Treaty was in many ways everything that the Western Allies had feared since the Bolsheviks seized power in October. The Treaty signed over massive tracts of Russian territory to German control, including much of the Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Baltic states. This included some of Russia's most fertile land, much of its population, and a vast percentage of Russia's industrial capacity, both in manufacturing and coal resources. In addition to the economic benefit that Germany could derive from this new territory the Treaty also ended any hopes, for the time being, of a serious threat to Germany from the East.

By necessity, intervention had to focus in two locations. The only places where large numbers of Allied troops could enter Russia were the ports of Archangel in the North and

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[14] Ullman, *Intervention and the War,* 92-98.
[15] *The History of the Times: Volume IV Part I: 1912-1920* (London: The office of *The Times,* 1952), 265.

Vladivostok in the East. In both ports, and in Vladivostok in particular, a massive back log of war materiel had built up. These supplies, which had been shipped to Russia by the Allies, had been stockpiled in port due to the failure of the Russian rail network to move them out. The Trans-Siberian railroad, connecting Vladivostok to Europe, was wholly inadequate for the task of shipping the massive stocks West, so the supplies had simply piled up. Some had been delayed so long in warehouses that they had begun to rot. One of the primary objectives for the early stages of intervention was the protection of these stores from seizure at the hands of the Bolsheviks, or the Germans. When Japanese Marines first landed in Vladivostok in April of 1918 their stated objective was to maintain order and protect the supply depots.[16] In theory, these far-flung ports could also serve as bases around which anti-Bolshevik Russian forces could rally, as papers such as *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* would argue.

Despite humble beginnings in April of 1918, the intervention gradually grew to involve the commitment of thousands of Allied troops and substantial amounts of money and war material. At first Allied intervention seemed hopeful and the various anti-Bolshevik armies it supported seemed to gradually squeeze in on Soviet Russia from all sides. General Denikin's army advanced in the South, Admiral Kolchak from Siberia and Allied forces advanced south from Archangel in the summer of 1919. However, divided command, failing morale, and lack of commitment to the cause combined with astonishing military capability on the part of the Bolsheviks turned the tide of battle. Despite early success, Kolchak's army was driven back some 2000 miles by the Red Army by November 1919.[17] By February 1920,

[16] Ullman, *Intervention and the War,* 87-90.
[17] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 173

Denikin had been driven from the Ukraine and defeated.[18] The same month, Admiral Kolchak was executed by the Bolsheviks. In September of 1919, the last Allied troops withdrew from Archangel,[19] though the Japanese would remain in the Russian Far East until October 1922.[20]

Over four years, from 1918-1922, the intervention by the Allied nations in Russia involved tens of thousands of troops from a myriad of nationalities, from Poles and Czechs to Americans and Japanese. The legacy of intervention can clearly be seen in the 20th century and its shadow colored East/West relations for decades. So much so that Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev commented on it during his visit to the United States in 1959.[21] However, for many in the west, the knowledge that Allied troops even set foot in Russia after the official end of the First World War, much less actively engaged in combat with Russian troops, would come as a surprise. Why? How could so influential a conflict be so forgotten or deliberately hidden, at least from the American side, that in the 1940s, barely more than 20 years after the fact, the *Columbia Encyclopedia* would say "American forces did not participate in the fighting between the Allies and the Bolsheviks."[22] Given this lack of general knowledge it is necessary to examine the press, which was supposed to keep the people informed.

One key aspect of the politics of the intervention was the role of the British press and state propaganda. By 1917, British newspapers, such as *The Times of London* and *The Manchester Guardian*, were some of the most circulated papers worldwide, as well as in the

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[18] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 170.
[19] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 181.
[20] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 174.
[21] E. M. Halliday, *The Ignorant Armies: The Anglo-American Archangel Expedition: 1918-1919* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), xi.
[22] Halliday, *The Ignorant Armies*, 14.

United Kingdom itself.[23] This made them powerful tools to shape public opinion and policy. An understanding of the British press and its relationship with the World War I propaganda system is crucial to understanding the course of intervention and the Russian Civil War.

Historiography

Such major events as the 1917 Revolutions and the Russian Civil War have generated substantial literature already. This generally falls into three categories: analyzing the Civil War and the intervention, Britain's First World War propaganda apparatus, and the press coverage of the Russian Civil War, itself. The literature regarding the Civil War depicts the confused, chaotic nature of intervention with its ever-shifting motivations, justifications, and goals, particularly, the disruption created by the multinational nature of the intervention. The analyses done of Britain's propaganda efforts show rocky beginnings, before developing into an effective and complex weapon in the government's arsenal at home and particularly abroad. These analyses also focus on the growing closeness between Britain's newspapermen and the propagandists themselves. Finally, existing literature on the press and the Civil War, such as Philip Knightley's *The First Casualty*, argue that the press abandoned objective reporting completely when it came to Russia and the Bolsheviks and showed clear and blatant political bias. According to some scholars, such as Knightley and Charlotte Alston, the majority of the press launched a deliberate campaign to encourage the British government towards intervention through blatantly anti-Bolshevik columns and editorials. Taken together, these three lines of analysis suggest that, rather than an attempt by the press of the political right to influence policymakers, the press campaign was part of a government

[23] Charlotte Alston, "British Journalism and the Campaign for Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920," *Revolutionary Russia* 20, no. 1 (2007): 35-36.

effort to promote sympathy for intervention on the part of the British people and the international community.

Richard Ullman's three volume work on Anglo-Soviet relations is one of the most in-depth studies of the period, and devotes an entire volume to the build-up to intervention prior to the Russian Civil War. Arguing that the Allied policy towards Russia originated primarily in London, he lays out a clear progression of events, from the collapse of the provisional government in 1917 until the beginning of major Allied intervention in late 1918.[24] He describes the British view of the October Revolution as "just another black event in an autumn of unmitigated gloom."[25] He is referring to the devastating defeats at Passchendaele and Caporetto, which cast a grim outlook on the war on the Western Front. One of Ullman's main arguments is that British policy towards the Revolution and the Bolsheviks stemmed from the harsh strategic situation they faced in regards to Germany. He argues that the focus of British policy was to keep Russia in the war with Germany rather than to oppose the Revolution itself, and that the hostility towards the Bolsheviks was due to their advocacy of a general armistice and willingness to withdraw Russia from the conflict.[26] In his second volume, Ullman states, "For the British government the intervention only gradually, and imperceptibly, became an effort whose purpose was to overthrow the Bolshevik regime at Moscow."[27] However, he also frequently quotes key members of government, such as the former ambassador to Russia, Sir George Buchanan. Buchanan enjoyed a close relationship

[24] Ullman, *Intervention and the War,* vii.
[25] Ullman, *Intervention and the War,* 19.
[26] Ullman, *Intervention and the War,* 19-81.
[27] Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo Soviet Relations 1917-1921 Volume 2: Britain and the Russian Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 9.

with both the Tsarist and the Provisional governments and expressed a personal opposition for the Bolsheviks and their goals.[28]

Another crucial aspect of the intervention that Ullman and others, such as Ian Moffat, point out was the confusion engendered by the multiple nations involved in intervention. Ullman and Moffat in his book, *The Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918-1920: The Diplomacy of Chaos*, both argue that the competing national objectives of the various Allied nations created disorder and confusion among the intervening armies. Moffat argues, while Great Britain and France were inclined towards intervention in order to either keep Russia in the war, the Japanese joined in the intervention largely to secure their position in the Far East, to further their own Imperial ambitions.[29] He also points out the United States had little interest in intervention, except to oppose Japanese expansion.[30] Ullman also supports this claim, arguing President Wilson opposed intervention: "Washington's position was that intervention would antagonize the Russian people; there was no immediate need for it..."[31] Both authors emphasize the confusion and conflict inherent in the intervention, and argue that this lack of unity was critical to its failure. There was little to no unity of command in Russia in either of the areas of major intervention, Siberia or Archangel. This meant that the forces on the ground operated in a confused and disorderly fashion leading to the abject failure of the mission.

Several analyses of the British propaganda efforts have been written, such as M. L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor's *British Propaganda During the First World War, 1914-1918.* Sanders and Taylor argue the British government began the war with little interest in

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[28] Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War,* 9-24.
[29] Ian Moffat, *The Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1920: The Diplomacy of Chaos* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 4-5.
[30] Moffat, *The Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1920,* 4-5.
[31] Ullman, *Intervention and the War,* 102.

propaganda and its efforts to create a propaganda apparatus were an "impressive exercise in improvisation."[32] Prior to the war, British politicians and civil servants, particularly within the Foreign Office, had little desire to influence public opinion or control the press.[33] They also argue, while the government neglected the use of direct propaganda, it did emphasize the role of censorship to control the media. In fact, the creation of the Press Bureau, which controlled the flow of information, was ordered on August 5, 1914, just hours after the declaration of war.[34] The other elements of the propaganda system appear to have been much more haphazard, with a myriad of offices, such as the Neutral Press Committee, the News Department of the Foreign Office and the War Propaganda Bureau. These reported to different cabinet offices, and all conducted their own propaganda efforts, with the primary focus placed on neutral powers, such as the United States, but with little coordination of efforts.[35] An attempt to address these issues was made in 1916 by subordinating all foreign propaganda efforts to the Foreign Office, but Sanders and Taylor argue that this was ineffective.[36]

According to Sanders and Taylor, as the war progressed, the organization and methods of British propaganda changed substantially, particularly upon the creation of Lloyd George's government. They argue the main change was not in actual effectiveness but in who was running the propaganda. Their work shows how, through a gradual process, British propaganda services came to be dominated by the leaders of the British press. Sanders and Taylor state, the British press "became the servant of official propaganda more out of willing

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[32] M. L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-1918* (London: MacMillan Press, 1982), 1.
[33] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 3-4.
[34] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 19.
[35] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 32-54.
[36] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 55.

acquiescence than as a result of government coercion."[37] This process of press takeover of the propaganda apparatus culminated in the appointment of Lord Northcliffe, the owner of *The Times of London* and *The Daily News*, to a post in control of all wartime propaganda efforts in enemy nations.[38]

This sense of a growing relationship between the press and the government also appears in Martin Farrar's work, *News from the Front: War Correspondents on the Western Front 1914-1918*, in which he charts the path of journalists on the frontline. In the early days of the war, journalists were banned from the combat zone on the orders of then Secretary of State for War Herbert Kitchener.[39] According to Farrar, war correspondents came to be increasingly tied into the military structure, arguing, "the war correspondents had to overcome the military's and War Office's distrust of them. They achieved this by becoming a part of the military's façade which concealed the reality of the war from the Home Front."[40] This relationship, argues Farrar, represented a surrender on the part of the journalists to abandon objective reporting in favor of patriotic propaganda.

A similar argument is presented by Phillip Knightley in his book, *The First Casualty*, in which he lays out a history of war correspondents from the Crimean War to Vietnam. In the chapter he devotes to it, he argues that the Russian Civil War represented a nadir in objective war reporting. He claims that the complete lack of information available to the average Allied civilian about the events in Russia represented "a conspiracy – in which war correspondents were major participants."[41] He points to several factors for the lack of

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[37] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 31.
[38]Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda,* 31.
[39] Martin J. Farrar, *News from the Front: War Correspondents on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 1998), 5.
[40] Farrar, *News from the Front*, 148.
[41] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 149.

truthful reporting coming out of Russia. Like Ullman before him, he points out the strategic realities of the First World War: "the majority of the foreign correspondents were British or French, and to them the thought that the Russian military machine was running down and might actually stop was too painful to contemplate."[42] In other words, reporters failed to accurately convey the reality of the collapse of the Tsarist Empire before the 1917 revolutions, in order to avoid the demoralization that would be inflicted upon the Western Allies. One of the other problems preventing accurate reporting was the lack of correspondents within Russia. By the time of the intervention, Knightley points out, the bulk of information from within Russia came from a single correspondent.[43]

Knightley also lays out clearly his opinion of the best and worst of the British Press in regards to Russia. He refers to Morgan Philips Price, the correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian*, as "the best British war correspondent to emerge from the period."[44] He argues Price and, by extension, *The Guardian* were the only elements of the British press to present anything like an accurate picture of the Revolutions and Civil War. Conversely, he is harshly critical of *The Times*, saying, "The blame for Britain's state of public ignorance about Russia must rest largely with *The Times*."[45] He also refers to Harold Williams, who served as a correspondent for *The Times*, as "by far the worst war correspondent in Russia."[46] He points to numerous instances throughout the Civil War, particularly in the coverage of General Denikin's army in Southern Russia, largely provided by Williams, in which reporters either outright lied about the state of military conditions, or were so out of date with information

[42] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 150.
[43] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 164.
[44] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 151.
[45] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 151.
[46] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 155.

that it was completely useless.[47] He argues *The Times*, as the leading conservative paper, had a clear ideological objection to the Bolsheviks, and their clearly biased reporting reflected their convictions toward the destruction of the Bolshevik movement, citing an editorial article in which *The Times* stated: "The remedy for Bolshevism is bullets."[48] This animosity towards the Bolsheviks is also acknowledged by Ullman, who notes that "the British press took up from the start [of the Bolshevik Revolution] a set of positions which, for each newspaper, remained remarkably the same throughout the following four years."[49] Knightley makes clear comparisons between the two papers throughout the chapter, and his analysis is clearly in favor of *The Guardian*, though he does acknowledge that Philips Price abandoned objectivity in favor of the Bolsheviks, largely out of disgust of British censorship.[50]

This duality between *The Times* and *The Guardian* is the main point of Charlotte Alston's article "British Journalism and the Campaign for Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920." Alston argues that the majority of the British press, led by *The Times*, engaged in a deliberate campaign to convince the government to support anti-Bolshevik intervention. She points to the string of editorials and columns which railed against the Bolsheviks in not only *The Times*, but in numerous British papers, as well as recurring themes in the press.[51] These themes included the idea that the Bolsheviks were agents in the employ of the German government, a myth promulgated by *The Times*, as well as the frequent references to "the real Russia," in contrast to the Russia led by the Bolsheviks.[52] She also makes reference to Morgan Philips Price and *The Guardian* as one of the few non-

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[47] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 170-171.
[48] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 160.
[49] Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, 19.
[50] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 164.
[51] Alston, "British Journalism," 35-45.
[52] Alston, "British Journalism," 40.

anti-Bolshevik sources of news available in Britain.[53] She points out the vast majority of Price's dispatches from St. Petersburg were either heavily censored or stopped entirely as Bolshevik propaganda. She ultimately concludes, any press campaign in Britain was unable to convince the government to ignore the strategic, logistic, and morale problems inherent in intervention.

The official history of *The Times* acknowledges their hostility to the Bolsheviks, but attempts to justify it with the same argument used by Ullman to explain intervention: the realities of war. In the *Times'* analysis, written in the 1950s, it is easy to see a Cold War bias. They say:

> The main question, therefore… was: Will it improve or reduce the Allies' chances of beating the Germans?... the February Revolution would improve those chances: it therefore received the paper's welcome and support… Similarly, the October Revolution appeared to be a *coup d'état* by a band of extremists determined on pursuing ends of economic justice which were irrelevant to the prosecution of the war…[54]

This statement fails to justify any continued opposition to the regime after the conclusion of the First World War, as well as ignoring any sense of the possible justifications of the Bolshevik's actions. *The Times* does acknowledge that it may bear some responsibility for the "certain defeat,"[55] of Allied forces, by contributing to "fundamental British error… the belief that local forces could be raised in opposition to the Bolshevik regime." This is the closest *The Times* comes to admitting that their opposition to the Bolshevik Revolution was prejudicial and ignorant of the realities on the ground in Russia.

The *Manchester Guardian* has its own official history, *Biography of a Newspaper* by David Ayerst. Their account of the period reveals that they were under pressure to sever

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[53] Alston, "British Journalism," 38-39.
[54] *The History of the Times,* 241.
[55] *The History of the Times,* 268.

their relationship with Philips Price who was accused of circulating "Bolshevik Propaganda."[56] Ayerst reveals that support for the Revolutions was present at all levels in *The Guardian*, quoting owner and editor C. P. Scott, "Don't you feel the Russian revolution rather stirring in your bones…"[57] *The Guardian* makes it very clear that they supported the Revolution and opposed intervention, just as Knightley, Ullman and Alston claim.

In conclusion, the literature surrounding intervention in the Russian Civil War, British war-time propaganda and the British press reveals several major themes. First, the British government initially justified intervention as a strategic necessity to win the First World War, but eventually came to oppose the Bolshevik ideology, a change in war aims that became more important after intervention became harder to justify after the general armistice in November 1918. Second, intervention itself was a complicated and confused strategy, with a variety of different powers all vying for specific national objectives. Third, official British government propaganda had come to both control and be controlled by the British press, especially powerful "Press Barons,"[58] like Lord Northcliffe. Fourth, the coverage of the war provided by the British press was highly polarized and extremely limited. According to scholars like Knightley and Alston, the majority of the press, led by *The Times,* deliberately campaigned in favor of intervention and against the Bolsheviks, doing everything in their power to discredit and defame them. Meanwhile, the liberal press, centered on *The Manchester Guardian,* took what amounted to a pro-Bolshevik stance, especially through the actions of Philips Price within Russia itself. Alston argues the actions of the conservative papers, like *The Times*, represented a deliberate campaign to influence

[56] Ayerst, *Biography of a Newspaper*, 401.
[57] Ayerst, *Biography of a Newspaper*, 403.
[58] J. Lee Thompson, *Northcliffe: Press Baron in Politics 1865-1922* (London: John Murray, 2000).

government policy by shaping public opinion, a campaign which failed, due in large part to the exhaustion of the public after four years of warfare.

However, given the closeness between the British propaganda apparatus and the press and the level of censorship placed on the dispatches of a correspondent like Philips Price the question must be asked: what if the campaign in the press was instead a deliberate attempt by the government to support an already established policy? Without the ability to travel to Britain to access the personal archives and documents of the men involved, such as Prime Minister Lloyd George, Henry Wickham Steed, and others, or the ability to be a fly on the wall during their personal conversations, it is outside the scope of this paper to say for sure. What seems more likely than a deliberate cabal and conspiracy to discredit and delegitimize the Bolshevik's and the Soviet government is that a combination of interests led to the campaign. It was a combination of fear and military reality in regards to the war, economic and financial self interest in regards to the massive loans owed by the tsarist government, and sincere opposition to the political philosophy of the Bolsheviks. All of this came together to form a perfect storm of conditions to drive the British press further and further away from anything like moderate objectivity when it came to Russia and the Bolsheviks.

Ultimately, British press coverage of the Russian Revolutions and the subsequent Civil War was woefully inadequate. It failed on multiple levels and for a variety of reasons. Good or truly objective press coverage requires several things and in many ways, resembles the process of intelligence gathering. It requires skilled and honest agents (correspondents) to gather, interpret, and report information. It also requires unbiased, informed analysts (editors) to collate the reported information and decide what it means before distributing the information to those that need it (the public). In between the two there must be effective and

clear lines of communication to ensure the accurate transmission of information. Each one of these requirements represents a potential failure point for the entire system. No matter how skilled, knowledgeable, or fair the analyst, without accurate data they cannot reach correct conclusions. Equally, no matter how vital or accurate the information reported by those in the field, if the analysts willfully ignore it, discredit it, lack the knowledge to understand it or simply do not receive the information, it does not matter. From 1917 until the end of Allied intervention each one of these failure points would rupture at one time or another; some of them failed from the beginning and others only later under outside pressure. The British were unable to provide true objective coverage for a number of reasons: firstly, the lack of suitable correspondents; secondly, the biases and failures of the editors; and, lastly, the influence of the government and censors.

Correspondents: The Men on the Ground

The first major point of failure was in the correspondents that the British newspapers relied upon for information. Many of these men proved to be unreliable sources at best and a significant number of them had personal grievances and motivations. Even Morgan Philips Price, whom Knightley praised as "the best British war correspondent,"[59] fell prey to his own personal biases and lost any sense of objective reporting. In addition to their own biases, their ability to report on matters in Russia was hampered by factors beyond their control, such as both Russian and British censors. To examine the various factors at play in the coverage provided by the various correspondents fielded by the major British papers this paper will be discussing in depth two of the most influential correspondents. The first, Robert Wilton, who served as the Russia correspondent for *The Times*, at the beginning of the Revolution, before leaving in 1917 and later returning with the British forces in Siberia. And the second,

[59] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 151.

Morgan Philips Price, the correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian* who became so disgusted by the bias shown in the British newspapers that he gave in to the temptation to essentially become a propagandist for the other side.

These men represented both sides of the political divide regarding the Russian Revolution and wrote with very different perspectives on the events of 1917 and 1918. However, there are substantial similarities between the two men. Both had substantial experience in Russia: Wilton had been *The Times* correspondent there for 14 years, while Philips Price had spent a great deal of time in Russia as a businessman in the timber trade and had been sent there as a correspondent in 1914 by C. P. Scott, the *Guardian's* editor.[60] Both men were in close proximity to the major events of 1917. Wilton filed detailed eye-witness reports on the February Revolution, while Philips Price had an up-close view of the Bolshevik coup in October. Each one of these men covered different aspects and time periods of the war and intervention and each provides a different example for how the correspondents of the British press could be compromised in their objectivity.

First, Robert Wilton of *The Times* is the man whom Knightley accused, along with his paper, of being largely responsible for the lack of information available to the public regarding conditions in Russia.[61] According to *The Times* "Wilton's service, often important, was erratic; his health was uncertain. He spoke Russian so well that his English sounded slightly foreign."[62] Wilton had been popular with the Tsarist court but he had sent a message to Wickham Steed in December 1916, which noted the strife and dissatisfaction gripping the country and even predicted the fall of the regime, based on the plummeting national spirit in Russia. In November of 1916 he wrote "the patriotic spirit in Russia among the general

[60] *History of the Times,* 242. Knightley, *The First Casualty,* 151.
[61] Knightley, *The First Casualty,* 151.
[62] *History of the Times,* 242.

public is at a very low ebb… we must not blame the people very much. It is enough to dishearten the most patriotic man to follow the course of blundering [of the Tsarist government]."[63] *The Times* either never received the message or ignored it.[64]

Instead on December 11, 1916 they published a leader under the headline, "Russia Firm and United," saying, "Great Britain has never doubted the abiding determination of Russia to fight on steadfastly and doggedly until complete success is attained."[65] This clearly demonstrates some of the limits placed upon a correspondent, regardless of his caliber. If the editors in London never received the correspondent's dispatches, or chose to disregard them, it did not matter how factual they might have been. The ability of an editor in London to either willfully ignore, or simply never receive a correspondent's reports will be addressed later in a deeper discussion of the role of the editors in shaping press coverage.

Wilton was in Petrograd for the February Revolution and reported on it in great detail to *The Times*. *The Times* office in Petrograd was situated near the Winter Palace, the War Ministry, the Admiralty and other key government buildings that played a critical role in the fighting in Petrograd, giving Wilton what amounted to a front row seat to events.[66] His telegrams were printed in their entirety and took up almost an entire page of the March 16 issue of *The Times*. His accounting was factual, detailed and to the point. However, he does slip and reveal some of his own biases and beliefs in a brief paragraph:

> Unless his Majesty immediately complies with the wishes of the most moderate element among his loyal subjects, the influence at present exercised by the Provisional Committee of the Imperial Duma will pass wholesale in to the hands of the Socialists, who want to see a Republic established, but who are unable to institute

[63] *History of the Times,* 243.
[64] Knightley, *The First Casualty,* 151.
[65] "Russia Firm and United," *Times* (London, England), Dec. 11, 1916.
[66] "History of The Movement," *Times* (London, England), Mar. 16, 1917.

> any kind of orderly government and would inevitably precipitate the country into anarchy within and disaster without.[67]

In this paragraph, Wilton began to show some of the anti-socialist/Bolshevik bias which would lead to his departure from Russia. This bias led to a growing resentment of Wilton and *The Times* as 1917 wore on. Eventually, Wilton left Russia in September 1917 feeling stifled by "Petrograd censorship,"[68] as the Soviet had restricted the telegraph access of journalists from foreign newspapers of which they did not approve.[69] This removed him from Russia just at the critical time of the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1918 he returned to Russia as *The Times'* correspondent with the British forces in Siberia.[70] While there, he joined the staff of a White Russian officer, and made himself such a nuisance that Alfred Knox, commander of the British Military mission, called for his withdrawal.[71] Knightley describes Wilton's actions in Siberia as, "[compromising] any claim to objective reporting."[72] It is hard to see in what way a man actively serving in the military expedition, as a member of a general's staff, could be expected to provide reports upon it without bias or a political bent.

Morgan Philips Price, like Wilton, had spent a substantial portion of his career in Russia, and had substantial business ties there through his family's interests in the lumber trade.[73] Price had traveled through much of Russia and was in the Caucasus when the February Revolution struck.[74] He traveled back to St. Petersburg in the spring of 1917 and toured many of the rural provinces on his way. That summer, he wrote a series of highly

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[67] "History of The Movement," *Times* (London, England), Mar. 16, 1917.
[68] *History of the Times,* 254.
[69] *History of the Times,* 249.
[70] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 171.
[71] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 175.
[72] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 175.
[73] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 151.
[74] Morgan Philips Price, ed. Tania Rose, *Dispatches from the Revolution: Russia 1916-1918* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 7.

detailed articles about the situation outside of the major cities for *The Guardian*. He eventually made contacts within the Soviet government, particularly with Chicherin, the former unofficial Soviet representative in London, who would later become the Commissar for Foreign affairs. Chicherin actually save Price's life, as Price had been starving and was down to only 112 pounds, until Chicherin appealed to Lenin on his behalf.[75] In St. Petersburg, he still had access to British papers, such as *The Times*, and gradually became more and more disgusted by their reporting of conditions in Russia.[76] Price sent dozens of reports back to Manchester, but many of his dispatches were stopped in their entirety or doctored by the censor in London; in fact, nothing he wrote for the *Guardian* between June and August 1918 was published.[77]

This led him to write a pamphlet that would be distributed by Bolshevik forces among the Allied troops in Archangel, titled "The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia." This pamphlet was labeled as Bolshevik propaganda by the conservative press and members of the government.[78] Scott, editor of *The Guardian*, distanced himself from any official stance on the Soviets, aside from neutrality towards the internal affairs of another nation and told Price to do the same.[79] Price eventually left Russia for Berlin in November 1918 after the signing of the Armistice. His account of the journey from Moscow to Berlin was the first of his messages to the *Guardian* to not be stopped by the censor since June.[80] After arriving in Berlin he ceased writing for *The Guardian* and became the correspondent for the Labour paper, *The Daily Herald*. Despite Knightley's claim that Price was, "the best British war

[75] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 164
[76] Price, *Dispatches from the Revolution*, 8.
[77] Price, *Dispatches from the Revolution*, 6.
[78] Ayerst, *Biography of a Newspaper*, 401.
[79] Ayerst, *Biography of a Newspaper*, 401-406.
[80] Ayerst, *Biography of a Newspaper*, 400-401.

correspondent,"[81] an analysis of his writings during this period, including his dispatches to *The Guardian* shows his clear bias in favor of the Revolution and the Bolsheviks, which compromised his objectivity as a reporter.

His dispatches, both official ones to the *Guardian* and letters to his family were published by his daughter Tania Rose in a collection titled *Dispatches from the Revolution* in 1998. Additionally, his dispatches that were stopped by the British Press Bureau censor were published in 1995 in "What the Papers Didn't Say," by Johnathan Smele in *Revolutionary Russia*.[82] His dispatches show his clear partiality to the revolutionary cause in Russia, describing it in a memorandum to C. P. Scott in 1917 as "a step in the process of evolution," for Russia.[83] His dispatches also reveal a disdain for Wilton, *The Times*, and what he refers to as "The Northcliffe press."[84] He reported in a dispatch,

> Great indignation is expressed at the behavior of the Northcliffe Press in England, especially of its correspondent, Wilton, in Petrograd… I am doing all I can to tell the… leaders here about the nature of the abominable Northcliffe Press in England, how it is the organ of a reactionary syndicate in London… I think the people understand now… I only hope that they will turn *The Times* correspondent out of Petrograd.[85]

Price was a political radical, who would go on to serve as a Labour Party MP after the war, and the language used here reflects that. The reference to a "reactionary syndicate," controlling the "Northcliffe Press," i.e. *The Times* and *The Daily Mail*, mirrors the terms used by other socialist and communist writers.

The document that most seriously compromised Price, both as a reliable correspondent and in the eyes of the British government, was "The Truth About Allied Intervention." Before its publication, it was already clear that Price was extremely opposed to

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[81] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 151.
[82] Johnathan Smele, "What the Papers Didn't Say," *Revolutionary Russia*, 8, no.2 (1995): 129-165.
[83] Price, *Dispatches from the Revolution*, 37.
[84] Price, *Dispatches from the Revolution*, 41.
[85] Price, *Dispatches from the Revolution*, 41.

intervention. In a dispatch sent from Moscow on July 3, 1918 Price said, "today that rebellion will be raised against all who invade Russia… The Allies, therefore, if they intervene, can only rely upon those elements which support the Right Socialist Revolutionary Party… One is therefore tempted to ask what the Allies intend to do…. The Allies are sowing dragons' teeth in Eastern Europe…"[86] So after the beginning of large scale Allied intervention, in August 1918, it was unsurprising that he spoke out against it. "The Truth About Allied Intervention," lays out, what was in Price's opinion, a true and accurate account of the events that led to intervention, beginning with the February Revolution.[87] Price began by charging that the Allied governments "in order to suppress the workers' and peasants' revolution in Russia, must hide the truth about this Revolution."[88] He accused the Allies of using the power of the censor to deny their people accurate knowledge about the conditions within Russia and the events of the Revolution. His rhetoric throughout the pamphlet lauds the revolution and attacks the old order. It is clear where the charges of Bolshevik propaganda originate, when he made statements such as, "the workers and peasants of Russia dared to create a government which, by putting an end to the political and economic power of landlords and financial syndicates, definitely rooted out that poison in human society which alone is the cause of war."[89] In writing this pamphlet, Price thoroughly tarnished his credibility and credentials as an objective war correspondent. After the Armistice, in November 1918, Price felt that he had to report on the growing revolutionary activity in Germany, so he left Moscow for Berlin. As stated earlier, the reports he filed about this trip were the first of his dispatches published in *The Guardian* since June. His departure removed

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[86] Price, *Dispatches from the Revolution,* 135.
[87] Morgan Philips Price, "The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia," in *Dispatches from the Revolution,* ed. Tania Rose (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 141-149.
[88] Price, "The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia," in *Dispatches,* 141.
[89] Price, "The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia," in *Dispatches,* 143.

the only correspondent from a major British newspaper who remained in Russia. So, the first failure point in the process of news reporting gave way.

In some ways, it is hard to criticize the failure of the press to cover the intervention in Russia in a thorough and objective manner because of the highly confused and contradictory understanding of the conflict which permeated the allied governments. Essentially it is hard to blame the press for failing to gather accurate information on conditions in Russia when the actual national intelligence services failed to do so. In many ways, the two organizations were operating under the same set of restrictions. Both were hampered by the vast distances involved, both inside Russia and between Russia and Great Britain, and both had their sources of information within the center of Soviet Russia cut off by the Soviet. In fact, many of the news correspondents, such as Arthur Ransome, had connections with the British Secret Intelligence Service, the SIS.[90] Considering the difficulties which the government had in gathering information it becomes harder to blame the British press for failing so abysmally. As the *Times* history puts it "though it is the occasional task, it is not the proper duty of the Press to supply the Government with information which it ought to be able to obtain for itself."[91]

The British government had extremely limited access to information from Russia, and what information they had was conflicted and biased. As an official cabinet report stated, "No authoritative statement has ever been made on the conditions in Soviet Russia and there is no question upon which people differ more widely."[92] The Allied governments never formed an accurate picture of the conditions on the ground within the Soviet state, and thus it is hard to imagine how the British press would have been able to do any better.

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[90] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 163.
[91] *History of The Times*, 268.
[92] CAB 24/90/99, "Conflicting Reports on Conditions in Soviet Russia", Oct. 16, 1919, 1.

The information sources available to the Allied nations were unreliable at best and deliberately contradictory to one another. Jennifer Siegel's 1995 article, "British Intelligence on the Russian Revolution and Civil War — A Breach at the Source," says that throughout the Revolutions and Civil War, the British Government relied on two forms of sources for intelligence gathering, the first being the reports of overt British government sources such as Robert Bruce Lockhart, the functional British ambassador to the Soviet government, while the second were the less reliable reports of British nationals fleeing Russia and Russian émigrés fleeing the Bolsheviks.[93] Siegel goes on to state that after the removal of the last official British representation in Moscow in September 1918, the British government was reduced to only the less reliable, second-hand reports.[94] These reports were by their nature biased and partisan against the Bolsheviks, as they were dominated by pro-Tsarists who had fled the Bolshevik government.

In a very similar way, the gradual flight, recall, and expulsion of the various correspondents of the British press denied papers such as *The Times, The Daily Mail*, and *The Manchester Guardian* access to accurate information from within Russia. As stated earlier, *The Times'* chief Russian expert was their St. Petersburg correspondent, Robert Wilton, and over the course of 1917 he made himself extremely unpopular within Russia with the revolutionary parties.[95] He would not be replaced in St. Petersburg for 22 years after his departure from St. Petersburg in September 1917.[96] This left *The Times* blind to the events of the October Revolution. Despite questions that have been raised about Wilton's competence as a correspondent and his ability to be impartial, it is clear, that having no

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[93] Jennifer Siegel, "British Intelligence on the Russian Revolution and Civil War – A Breach at the Source," *Intelligence and National Security*, 10, no. 3 (1995): 468-485.
[94] Siegel, "British Intelligence," 470.
[95] *History of the Times,* 242.
[96] Knightley, *The First Casualty,* 157.

correspondent within Russia, whatsoever, severely hampered the ability of *The Times* to gather accurate information about the interior situation. Without a correspondent in Russia, *The Times* was limited to the same sources of information as the government, i.e. refugees, exiles and rumors. These sources were wholly inadequate for the purposes of accurate reporting.

Besides Wilton and Price, other correspondents, on both sides of the political divide were compromised in their ability to be objective. On the conservative side, there was Harold Williams, whom Knightley called, "the worst," war correspondent. Williams covered Denikin's army for *The New York Times,* and *The Times*. Williams was married to a prominent Tsarist Russian woman and was active in the anti-Bolshevik community in England prior to his arrival in Russia.[97] On the radical end of the spectrum was John Reed, who would go on to help found the American Communist Party and be buried in Red Square.[98]

The Editors

The second failure point in the press' coverage was within the editorial staffs of the major newspapers, particularly the conservative papers. These men were the ones who truly shaped the news as presented to the public, who decided which stories were printed and which were not, and how those stories were presented. The power of the editors to shape a story and its presentation can be clearly seen in the differing approaches taken by *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian*, in regards to the Secret Treaties controversy. When Morgan Philips Price obtained the text of the Secret Treaties from Trotsky, he sent it on to *The Guardian* as quickly as he could. C. P. Scott and *The Guardian* then published them in

[97] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 170.
[98] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 158. Reed is most famous for his detailed account of the October Revolution in *Ten Days that Shook the World.*

detail. *The Times* on the other hand refused to publish more than a summary of them, to avoid the embarrassment of the other Allied governments.[99] The power of the editors can also be seen in the failure of *The Times* to print Wilton's stories about the declining state of Tsarist Russia. That an editorial staff could simply decide that a story was or was not news was tremendous power. As such, these men needed to be unbiased and well-informed.

In the case of the conservative press, particularly *The Times*, when it came to Russia this was largely not the reality. By its own admission, at the time of the Revolution, *The Times* lacked a true expert in Russian affairs.[100] Henry Wickham Steed, the then Foreign Editor, though acknowledged as an expert in Central European affairs, had little interest in Russia.[101] Additionally, there were no members of the leadership who had any real idea what to think of the Bolsheviks, or a true socialist revolution, as *The History of The Times* puts it

> The idea of a campaign *ad maiorem proletariatis gloriam*… was so foreign to Wilton that he never understood it… the idea was equally foreign to Steed, to Dawson, to Northcliffe, to Lloyd George and to Milner. No one… had heard of the forces of the extreme Left except in terms that indicated them to be madmen.[102]

The implication is that *The Times* was woefully underprepared to deal with the situation that was rapidly unfolding in the collapsing Russian state. With their rapidly diminishing access to information, and what they did have being provided by unreliable, self-interested, and deeply biased sources, it is unsurprising that the editorial bent of *The Times* and the other conservative papers became deeply biased and opinionated against the Bolsheviks.

Throughout the Civil War and Allied intervention, the conservative British press, led by *The Times* launched a deliberate campaign to discredit the Bolsheviks, the Soviet government and its policies. This campaign came about from a combination of three factors:

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[99] Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 161.
[100] *The History of The Times,* 242.
[101] *The History of The Times,* 242.
[102] *The History of The Times,* 247.

lack of good information about the internal conditions of the Russian state, the war-time mentality which saw maintaining Russian participation in the war as a necessity, and the ideological opposition members of the conservative press and government felt towards the communism advocated by the Bolsheviks.

First, it must be established that the press did launch such a campaign. An analysis of the news articles, leaders, and editorials published by *The Times* from spring 1917, until the end of the war in November 1918, shows a pattern of anti-Bolshevik writing beginning as early as May of 1917. On May 4, 1917 *The Times* published an article under the by-line of their "Own Correspondent," which referred to the various peace parties in Russia as "extremists," and referenced the activities of the "notorious Maximalist [Bolshevik] Lenin." In the same article *The Times* made clear that in its view, there was a distinction between the Petrograd Soviet, and the legitimate government of Russia, arguing that the Soviet was a body which in no way represented the Russian people.[103]

After the May article, a series of leaders and editorials, discussed below, began which expounded upon three main anti-Bolshevik themes. First, *The Times* continued to expound on the message that there was a divide between the Russian people and the Bolshevik led Soviet, that the workers' and soldiers' committees had no legitimate claim to power and that the Russian people had no desire for a separate peace with Germany. Second, that the Bolshevik's were "traitors" to Russia and the Allies. And third, that the Bolsheviks were a "band of anarchists… fanatics," and "German Agents." These would be the dominant accusations raised by the British press to discredit the Bolshevik government appearing in several papers in addition to *The Times*.

[103] "No Separate Peace for Russia," *The Times* (London, England), May 5, 1917.

The distinction between the Bolsheviks and the "Real Russia" served as the basis for the other two arguments, and as such was continued throughout 1917 and 1918. In a leader published on July 24, 1917, titled: "Russia's Enemies at Home," *The Times* referred to the "Real Russian People."[104] The "Real Russia," theme does occur repeatedly throughout *The Times*, such as in an editorial written in November 1917 titled, "A Leninist Armistice," which stated "could they suppose [the armistice with Germany] represented the will of the Russian people?"[105] This argument was intended to deprive the Soviet government of legitimacy in the eyes of the British public. By establishing a distance between the Soviets and "the Real Russian People," *The Times* could argue that there was a "Real Russia," to save from the threat of the Bolsheviks, and that this Russia would not drop out of the war and would continue to fight.

The "Real Russia" argument was also used to justify and encourage intervention. Editorials and leader frequently expounded on the belief that the "Real Russia" would welcome Allied intervention with open arms, and would rally to the cause of defeating the Bolsheviks. An editorial, published in *The Times* on May 7, 1918, under the title "Allied Aid to Russia," said, "It is certain that… the aid of the Allies would be cordially welcomed by great numbers of sensible and patriotic Russians."[106] In this editorial we see several aspects of the "Real Russia," myth. The first is the use of the words sensible and patriotic. The word sensible appeared several times in editorials which addressed the "Real Russia" and patriotic was generally used to refer to anyone in Russia who opposed the Bolsheviks.[107] The "Real Russia," was made of calm, cool individuals who believed that the war was necessary and

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[104] "Russia's Enemies at Home," *The Times* (London, England), Jul. 24, 1917.
[105] "A Leninist Armistice," *The Times* (London, England), Nov. 23, 1917.
[106] "Allied Aid to Russia," *The Times* (London, England), May 7, 1918.
[107] "Japan and Russia," *The Times* (London, England), May 2, 1918. And
"Bolshevik Treachery," *The Times* (London, England), Dec. 5, 1917.

would fight for Russia, as opposed to the raving madmen in Moscow and Petrograd screaming for revolution. The other aspect of the almost mythic "Real Russia," was the idea that it would rise with the coming of Allied intervention, that there was a great mass of the Russian people who opposed Bolshevism and the Bolsheviks enough that they would rally to the Allies.

The "Real Russia," argument appeared in other papers as well. *The Daily Mail*, which was also owned by Northcliffe also made distinctions between the "Real Russia," and the Bolsheviks. On November 9, 1917, the *Mail* published its response to the Bolshevik Revolution, "The Robespierres were not France, and the Lenins have no right to pose as representing Russia."[108] This works on two levels, first by delegitimizing the Bolshevik claims to power but also by comparing the Bolsheviks to one of history's great villains Maximillian Robespierre, leader of the bloody reign of terror during the French Revolution.

The "Real Russia," argument seriously encouraged the erroneous belief there was a great mass of the Russian people, whom would rise against the Bolsheviks, if only the Allies would arrive to rescue and inspire them. *The History of The Times* refers to this as "The fundamental British error," that any significant local troops would rally to the cause of Bolshevik defeat.[109] This encouraged the plan to have the Japanese lead intervention in Siberia and the Russian Far East.

The British press led by the *Times* fully endorsed this plan. Leaders and editorials repeatedly called for Japanese intervention in Siberia, and frequently referenced the true and loyal service, which the Japanese had rendered to the allies during the war. In a March editorial in 1918 titled "The German Road to the East," *The Times* fully advocated the idea of

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[108] "Zederblum, Alias Lenin, Claims Power," *Daily Mail* (London, England) Nov. 9, 1917.
[109] *The History of The Times*, 268.

a Japanese landing in Siberia, calling it a "rallying point for Russians who seek salvation," from the Bolsheviks.[110] Less than a week later *The Times* quoted the Foreign Secretary Balfour on Japanese intervention, saying that the cabinet secretary referred to Japan as "a trusted Ally," which had been "valiant and faithful," and that a Japanese force in the East would serve as a "nucleous around which pro-Ally elements… could gradually muster."[111] These articles seem almost unctuous in their attempts to curry favor with the Japanese or to encourage trust in Japan. It is possible that the target of such articles was in fact the American government, considering the emphasis placed on newspaper propaganda towards allied and neutral governments by the new propaganda machinery run by Beaverbrook, the Canadian newspaper tycoon, along with Northcliffe and Steed.[112] This seems especially likely considering America's reluctance to involve itself in intervention and its opposition to Japanese intervention.

The American government was officially opposed to any intervention for some time and was adamantly against Japan's involvement in Russian affairs particularly if Japan elected to intervene unilaterally. On March 5, 1918, the American Secretary of State, Reading, sent a telegram to the American Ambassador to Japan denouncing intervention as the American government felt that it would only spark resentment for the Allies among the Russian people.[113] Even the American Ambassador to Russia, Francis, who remained in Russia longer than the other allied ambassadors, and was a firm proponent of intervention,

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[110] "The German Road to the East," *The Times* (London, England), Mar. 8, 1918.
[111] "Mr. Balfour on Japanese Intervention," *The Times* (London, England), Mar. 15, 1918.
[112] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda,* 59.
[113] The State Department, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918 Russia Vol. 2* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1918), 67.

advocating it several times in telegrams to Reading in May 1918, expressed an opposition to Japanese intervention.[114]

This was unacceptable to the British government as they felt that any intervention needed to be supported by all the Allies to be legitimate, and that an intervention in Siberia would require American cooperation to be successful.[115] Repeated notes and messages crossed the Atlantic as the British made a continuous effort to convince the Americans that intervention was both necessary and justified. A direct appeal was made by Balfour to Reading in a telegram on April 25.[116] As Sanders and Taylor point out, the newly reorganized propaganda administration emphasized the use of the press as a form of soft propaganda in neutral and Allied nations, to support British interests and efforts.[117] While this is not direct evidence that *The Times* was working on behalf of the government in this instance, it is clear that, in this case, *The Times* was serving the interests of the government by making its arguments for it in the press. Thirty years after the fact, *The Times* lamented its involvement in encouraging intervention saying: "Still less was it appreciated that the one thing that might induce Russians of military age to remain in arms was foreign interventions, whether German, British, or American; or most certainly, Japanese."[118] This is ironic considering the reports from government men-on-the-spot, like ambassador Francis, or correspondents, like Philips Price, who said exactly that.[119]

The other themes of the conservative editorials built off this central concept, that the Bolsheviks in no way represented the true Russian people. The Bolsheviks were frequently

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[114] The State Department, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918 Russia Vol. 1* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1918), 521.
[115] Ullman, *Intervention and the War,* 89.
[116] *FRUS 1918 Russia Vol. 1*, 525-527.
[117] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda,* 69.
[118] *The History of the Times,* 265.
[119] Price, *Dispatches from the Revolution,* 127-128.

referred to as "traitors," their actions were "betrayals," both to Russia and to her Allies. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, in particular, was portrayed as a grand Faustian bargain, in which the Communists signed away Russia's most valuable provinces in exchange for power and German gold. *The Times* frequently attacked the Treaty as a "Bolshevik Peace," and argued that the "Real Russia," would never submit. *The Times* has acknowledged that the charge that peace was not the desire of the Russian people, has been proven false, and the *History of The Times* points out the failure of the editorial staff at the time to see this reality, "It was hardly guessed in the office that there was nothing that ninety-nine out of every hundred Russians wanted except peace, no matter on what terms."[120] Perhaps if the editors had not ignored Wilton's reports prior to the revolution on the conditions within the Russian Empire, this conclusion would not have escaped them. However, the refusal to accept that the Russian people no-longer had the will to fight makes a great deal of sense in light of the strategic situation. Acknowledging the defeat of Russia was a terrifying prospect for the British in the fall of 1917 and spring of 1918.

It was this fear that led the press to label the Bolsheviks traitors to the Allied cause. By signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Bolsheviks were turning their backs on the West in the fight against tyranny. The words "traitor," and "betrayal," were frequently used to describe many of the Bolsheviks' actions.[121] This dovetailed with the "Real Russia," arguments because if the "Real Russia" was patriotic and courageous, then clearly it would never forsake Russia's Allies out of cowardly self-interest.

Tied in with the idea that the Bolsheviks were traitors to the Allied cause was the charge that the Bolsheviks were traitors to all of Russia, and had been from the beginning

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[120] *History of The Times,* 265.
[121] "Russia's Enemies at Home," *The Times* (London, England), Jul. 24, 1917.

because they were agents of Germany. It was a frequently repeated charge in both *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* that the Bolsheviks, or at least their leaders were agents in the employ of the Kaiser who had been deliberately sent to Russia for the express purpose of ensuring its defeat. In a June 1917 editorial, the *Daily Mail* made reference to "German paymasters," and "the hidden hand of Germany in Russia."[122] Again, on the 5th and 28th of July the *Daily Mail* referred to German agents, working against the interests of Russia and the Russian people.[123] Finally, in response to the October Revolution, the *Daily Mail* referred to Lenin as "[a] traitor in the pay of Germany."[124] *The Daily Mail* was not alone, *The Times,* in leaders published on May 12, 1917 and June 18, 1917 referred to members of the revolutionary movement in Russia who called for peace with Germany, "traitors,"[125] and "German Agents,"[126] respectively. In July, an editorial appeared saying "the centre of this treason [peace movement] is… the [Bolshevik] movement in Petrograd," it went on to say, "The Germans have never found so good an investment… as in financing this parasite of the democratic revolution."[127]

Despite Germany's role in providing Lenin's sealed train car to Finland Station in 1917, historians have largely proven that there is little to no evidence that the Bolsheviks were in the direct pay of the Kaiser.[128] But even in the 1950s, *The Times* still defended this accusation in the context of the time.[129] Adding fuel to the fire at the time were the rumors that the Bolsheviks were utilizing and arming the thousands of German and Austrian P.O.W.s

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[122] "The Hidden Hand in Russia," *Daily Mail* (London, England), June 4, 1917.
[123] "Russia's Great Day," *Daily Mail* (London, England), Jul. 05, 1917 and "A Dictator in Russia," *Daily Mail* (London, England), Jul. 28, 1917.
[124] "Zederblum, Alias Lenin, Claims Power," *The Daily Mail* (London, England), Nov. 9, 1917.
[125] "The Allies and Russia." *The Times* (London, England), May 12, 1917.
[126] "German Intrigue in Russia," *The Times* (London, England), June 18, 1917.
[127] "Russia's Enemies at Home," *The Times,* (London, England), Jul. 24, 1917.
[128] Alston, "British Journalism and the Campaign for Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920," 40.
[129] *History of the Times,* 254.

in Siberia, to add to their manpower.[130] This was a fear shared by the Allied governments as shown in a message from the Japanese Ambassador in Washington to the American Secretary of State, in August of 1918.[131] The German agent accusation tied into another fear, which the conservative press played upon, that of German contamination within England.

This was the fear of German agents and propagandists within Great Britain herself. *The Daily Mail*, in particular, seems to have fixated upon this fear, and the potential of a relationship between the Bolsheviks, Germany, and defeatism in the United Kingdom. An editorial in *The Daily Mail*, shortly after the Bolshevik coup in November, warned of the "Dangers of Boloism," meaning the influence of German propaganda to weaken the morale and fighting spirit of a nation.[132] *The Daily Mail* argued that the people of Great Britain needed to remain strong to prevent a repeat of Russia.

In general terms, the campaign of the conservative press to discredit the Bolsheviks and turn the British people against them, relied upon fear. The last fear which permeated the leaders and editorials of *The Times* was the perennial British fear of a threat to India. The editorials painted a picture of a German advance across the vastness of Russia, which would either drive along the Trans-Siberian railroad all the way to the Pacific, or, would join with a Turkish thrust across Persia to drive into Russia's Central Asian provinces.[133] To counter this threat, *The Times* argued it was necessary to create a "Bulwark in the Far East," using Japanese troops, who could stop the German advance at the Urals. There was something to the fear that the Germans would drive all the way to the Pacific, as their armies had moved across vast tracts of European Russia, and the collapse of the Russian army uncovered the

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[130] "Brest-Litovsk and the Far East," *The Times* (London, England) Mar. 2, 1918.
[131] *FRUS, Russia Vol. 2*, 345.
[132] "The Dangers of Boloism," *The Daily Mail*, (London, England), Nov. 12, 1917.
[133] "A Bulwark in the Far East," *The Times* (London, England), May, 21, 1918. And "The Central Asian Menace," *The Times* (London, England), Mar. 21, 1918.

flank of the British forces facing the Turks in Mesopotamia and the Caucasus. However, given the transfer of German troops from the Eastern Front to France, it is hard to imagine where the Germans would have gotten the resources for an Asiatic campaign.[134] But the military reality was not as important as the reality of the fear. A fear that was fed by statements from the Bolsheviks such as the "Council of People's Commissars, Appeal to the Moslems of Russia and the East," which called on the Muslims and Hindus of Asia to throw off colonial rule. Though the document does not specifically mention India, as opposed to Persia and Armenia, the reference to Hindus is clear enough.[135] Central Asia was the only way for an enemy, without control of the sea, to threaten the Empire, and with Brest-Litovsk and the Bolsheviks in power, the road seemed open for the Germans to take.

The conservative press was deprived of accurate information from its correspondents, forced to rely on biased and second-hand information, and facing a strategic military station that looked increasingly grim. In this situation, they paid heed to their fears, and their own political biases, and launched a campaign to discredit and defame the Bolsheviks in order to support the policy of intervention, which they erroneously assumed could be carried out successfully and would have the support of the Russian people.

As a contrast to the right-wing biased, almost jingoistic and sometimes sensationalist editorials of *The Daily Mail*, and *The Times*, was the left-wing biased *Manchester Guardian*. The differing attitudes between the papers is clear to see with an examination of the different stances each took on the issue of the peace proposals put forward by the Petrograd Soviet in the spring and summer of 1917. These proposals called for an assembly of international

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[134] CAB 24/12/78, "Military Effect of Russia seceding from the Entente," May 9, 1917.
[135] Joseph Stalin and Vladimir Lenin, "Council of People's Commissars, Appeal to the Moslems of Russia and the East," Dec. 7, 1917, Web. http://soviethistory.msu.edu/1921-2/the-muslim-east/the-muslim-east-texts/appeal-to-the-moslems-of-russia-and-the-east/.

socialist leaders in Stockholm, to work out a program for general peace. In editorials, *The Times* referred to the Stockholm conference as a "German Intrigue," or "trap," meant to divide the peoples of the allied nations, to reduce their will to carry on the war, as a part of a campaign of psychological warfare against the morale of their enemies.[136] Meanwhile the *Guardian* reported the Stockholm conference quite differently. In an editorial simply titled "Russia and Peace," the *Guardian* cast a thinly veiled shot at *The Times* when it said, "Bad friends of Russia, of England, and of civilization are trying to create the conviction that because democratic Russia [led by the Petrograd Soviet] repudiates Imperialism it is aiming at a separate peace." The editorial went on to say, "The [Soviet] has decided to summon in a neutral country an International Socialist… for the ending of war and the secure establishment of peace."[137] The *Guardian* editorial makes no reference to German influence on the peace process, no accusations about the motivations of the Soviet, and no depictions of the "band of anarchists and fanatics," which the *Times* would later describe.[138] The writing is much more sober and calm in its depiction of events.

The same sense of sobriety can be seen in later editorials, especially in the *Guardian's* response to the October Revolution. *The Daily Mail* and *The Times* responded to the October Revolution in very similar ways. *The Times* lamented that "Russia free for an instant," was now in the hands of "extremists,"[139] while, as stated earlier, *The Daily Mail*, responded to the October Revolution by comparing Lenin to Robespierre. *The Guardian* on the other hand, which had not spent the preceding summer referring to the Bolsheviks as traitors and madmen, published a much more moderate response. Their editorial, "The

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[136] "German Intrigue in Russia," *The Times* (London, England), May 9, 1917.
[137] "Russia and Peace" *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, England), May 14, 1917.
[138] "A Leninist Armistice," *The Time,* (London, England), Nov. 23, 1917.
[139] "Russia's Critical Hour," *The Times* (London, England), Nov. 9, 1917.

Maximalist's Coup," calmly laid out the progression of Bolshevik power, and how the various events of 1917 had increased the standing of the Bolsheviks with the Russian people, and put them in position to seize power in Petrograd. *The Guardian,* unlike *The Times,* reported on the popular support for the Bolsheviks, citing the elections within the Petrograd Soviet and growing support among the peasantry.[140] *The Guardian* maintained the same tone in other editorials, such as "The State of Russia," when they cautioned against extreme pessimism, saying that conditions in Russia, "should encourage us not to take the situation too tragically."[141] Rather than automatically assume that the Bolsheviks would unilaterally withdraw Russia from the war, or claiming that they were traitors in the employ of Germany, the *Guardian* seems willing to give them the benefit of the doubt.

When it comes to the charge that the Bolsheviks were German agents, *The Guardian* in fact directly refuted it. After the Bolshevik government called for armistice negotiations on November 22, 1917, *The Guardian* published a response under the title, "Russia and Her Allies." It said, "it does not look on this showing, that the [Bolsheviks] are merely German agents, bought with German gold, for the fulfillment of German ends."[142] In the Bolshevik peace proposals the *Guardian* saw, "the workings of a theory, not… of German gold." *The Guardian* saw no reason to assume that the Bolsheviks wanted a German victory, and instead that they sought to defeat German Imperialism through the power of revolutionary propaganda.

This is not to say that *The Guardian* endorsed the Bolshevik peace proposals or was eager for Russia to withdraw from the war. The same editorial stated, "We may think what we will about the practicality of their methods, but there is no obvious reason to suspect their

[140] "The Maximalist's Coup," *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, England), Nov. 9, 1917.
[141] "The State of Russia," *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, England), Nov. 21, 1917.
[142] "Russia and Her Allies," *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, England), Nov. 27, 1917.

honesty." And, "We should like to think that the Maximalists will prove successful in appealing straight to the German soldiers in the trenches, but there is nothing to encourage such optimism." The editorial finished with the passage, "But let the Maximalists also try to understand the Allied democracies, who know that they are in this war through Russia, and that the new Russia cannot simply reject the responsibility, for the acts and the consequences of the acts of the old Russia."[143] *The Guardian* was clearly skeptical about the Bolshevik program for peace but equally clearly did not view it as treason to the Allies. If anything, *The Guardian* seems to have looked on the Bolsheviks with a sense of patronizing paternalism, the tone of the editorial suggests that the Bolsheviks were simply misguided idealists, with no understanding of how the world worked. It can also be seen however, that *The Guardian* shared the fears of *The Times* and *Daily Mail* about the impact of the revolution and a collapse of the Eastern front on the strategic situation, despite the less sensational writing than the other two papers.

In regards to intervention, and more specifically, the intervention of Japan in Eastern Siberia, *The Guardian* again took a wholly different stance to the other papers. In an editorial titled, "Japan and Russia," *The Guardian* was harshly critical of the idea of Japanese intervention. It directly called out the claims that the Germans would drive across Russia and be stopped by Japanese forces landing in Vladivostok, referring to it as "fantastic." The editorial goes on to state, "If Japan should decide to take Vladivostok, Harbin, and Russia's territory in the Extreme East, it will not be to please the French or to help the Allies. It will be because Japan has long desired to possess those places."[144] This was a far cry from the noble ally depicted by *The Times*.

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[143] "Russia and Her Allies," *The Guardian*, Nov. 27, 1917.
[144] "Japan and Russia," *The Guardian*, Feb. 28, 1918.

An examination of the editorials of the leading British newspapers, reveals several things. Firstly, among the conservative papers there was a concerted effort to discredit and vilify the Bolsheviks. This campaign originated largely from the fear of the effect of a Russian withdrawal on the global military situation, but also from an opposition to the Bolshevik political system. The campaign attempted to divorce the Bolsheviks from the bulk of the Russian people in the eyes of the British public, and relied heavily on exaggerated fears and hyperbole to promote an interventionist policy. In contrast was *The Manchester Guardian*, which covered the same events, with a much more even handed style. *The Guardian's* coverage avoided the demonization of *The Times* and *The Daily Mail*, and remained substantially calmer and less prone to dramatics. In addition, *The Guardian* directly opposed intervention in Russia. By looking at the editorials of these papers it is easy to see the impact the editorial staff can have on the tone and message of news stories.

Censorship and Propaganda

Besides the compromised reliability of the correspondents, and the political bias of the editors, there was a third influence that prevented the British press from providing accurate and in depth coverage of events in Russia. This was the influence of the government on the press. The British government had an interesting relationship with the press during the First World War, specifically through the various propaganda offices which had been created during the war. The press existed both as a weapon of the government in the propaganda war but also as the reporter and critic of the government's actions. Additionally, the government exerted tremendous control on the flow of information available to the press. The influence of the government on the coverage of the Revolution was felt in two ways: first through the relationship between leading pressmen and the Lloyd

George government, and second through the power of the censor to limit communication into and out of Russia.

The close relationship between the press and the Lloyd George government was a matter of some consternation in the contemporary political climate. Lloyd George's political rivals felt that he had created far too close a relationship between 10 Downing Street and the publishers of Fleet Street, especially when he placed prominent figures of the British press, such as Lord Northcliffe and Henry Wickham Steed, into positions of power within his cabinet and his newly organized propaganda apparatus.[145] This was even a matter of debate in parliament.[146] When the question of the influence of pressmen on Lloyd George and Lloyd George's influence on the press was raised, *The Times* responded by mocking the idea in a leader.[147]

The influence of the "Press Baron[s]" on politics in general and on Lloyd George's career can be seen in the fall of Prime Minister Asquith's coalition government in December 1916. According to Steed's memoir, *Through Thirty Years*, the collapse of Asquith's government was precipitated by Lloyd George's defection from the coalition and resignation from the post of Secretary of State for War.[148] The break between Asquith and Lloyd George began over Asquith's refusal to create a dedicated War Cabinet under the direct control of Lloyd George, a position which would have arguably given him comparable power to the Prime Minister.[149] Lloyd George took time to break the coalition, apparently threatening to resign several times before actually following through. Steed said, "Again and again Lloyd

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[145] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 31.
[146] "Parliament and the Press," *The Times* (London, England), Mar. 8, 1918.
[147] "Parliament and the Press," *The Times*, Mar. 8, 1918.
[148] Henry Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years Vol. II*. (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1924), 131.
[149] Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, 131.

George threatened to resign but always flinched at the at the last moment."[150] It was in this moment that the influence of the press was felt, as "At last, Lord Northcliffe's personal influence with him and the prospect of support from the Northcliffe newspapers helped him to make up his mind."[151] According to Steed, it was Lloyd George's faith in the power of Northcliffe and his dominant position in the press as the owner of *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* which enabled him to break from Asquith. This action was met by harsh criticism in the liberal press, particularly *The Manchester Guardian*. *The Guardian* published a thinly veiled editorial, which, essentially, accused the Northcliffe papers of aiding and abetting the enemy, by instilling political instability in a time of war.[152] This political alliance would reward Northcliffe throughout Lloyd George's premiership, as he received numerous government positions, such as the war mission to the United States and positions in the propaganda apparatus.

The cordial relationship between Northcliffe, Steed and Lloyd George can also be seen in the reaction to Lloyd George's "War Aims" speech made on January 5, 1918, to elucidate the reasons for carrying on the war. Steed says that immediately after giving the speech Lloyd George approached him and said, "for tactical reasons, it is important that it [the War Aims speech] should not be opposed in the Press… I hope *The Times* will support it." The War Aims speech was made, in part, to respond to the calls from Soviet Russia, for the Allies to clearly articulate their reasons for carrying on the war.

It should be said that Northcliffe performed admirably in the various positions in which he served, and appears to have been truly dedicated to the service of Great Britain. According to Steed, it was Northcliffe's dedication to his work in the United States, on

[150] Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, 131.
[151] Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, 131.
[152] "The Freedom of the Press," *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, England), Apr. 19, 1917.

behalf of Lloyd George's government, which led to the final collapse of his health and his ultimate death.[153] There is merit to the argument that placing control of the propaganda apparatus in the hands of men with experience in manipulating public opinion and a command of rhetoric and communication made a great deal of sense. Despite the, understandably, disturbing connotations of a close relationship between the government and the press, more specifically between a politician and the owners and editors of major newspapers, the rationale to justify the appointments is clear. Given the life or death nature of the global conflict in the minds of the participants, it was critical to always have the best man for the job in any given situation, and to Lloyd George, men like Steed and Northcliffe were the right men. They had the knowledge, skill, and dedication, which he needed to carry out the task at hand. However, it is hard to balance the concepts of free and independent journalism and civil service within one person. How a single individual could simultaneously wear the hats of a member of the government and an objective reporter of the government's actions is a difficult question to answer. What is clear is that the papers, which most clearly advocated for intervention, and supported the government's policies towards the Bolsheviks and Russia, were those owned by Lord Northcliffe.

The other way in which the government influenced press coverage was through the office of the censor. As stated earlier, the Press Bureau, and its control of information flow to the press, was established in the early days of World War I.[154] The necessary purpose of the Press Bureau was to prevent the publication of sensitive information regarding troop movements and other vital interests. However, in regards to Russia and the Bolsheviks the role of the censor seems to have become slightly confused, and rather political.

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[153] Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, 141-143.
[154] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda,* 19.

The impact of this office on press coverage is most clearly seen in the number of dispatches sent by Philips Price, which were blocked in whole or in part by the censor. The contents of these blocked messages also allow us to make some conclusions about the sort of information the Press Bureau considered dangerous to distribute about Bolshevik Russia. One telling blocked dispatch came from Price on June 29, 1918, from Moscow. In it, he referred to the Bolsheviks as being "as strong as ever," and was sharply critical of the Allied intervention.[155] In fact each of his stopped dispatches between June and September 1918 praised conditions within Soviet controlled Russia, such as the message sent on 10 July, which lauded the behavior of Bolshevik troops in suppressing a coup attempt, and an undated message, which noted that the food crisis in European Russia had largely abated.[156] Or the stopped dispatches criticized intervention.[157] In short, the censor stopped any information coming out of Russia which contradicted the line taken by the conservative press. With such a valuable source of information completely shut off by the censor, it is unsurprising that there was little to no coverage of the reality on the ground in Bolshevik controlled Russia.

Conclusions

While the *Times* is correct when it says that it is not the duty of the press to give the government information it should already have, it is the duty of the press to report honestly and factually, to make sure that their readers are given the best information possible. Overall, the British press failed in this duty in regards to the Russian Revolution. The correspondents who reported from Russia were biased, had limited access to information, and had their communications slashed by a government censor. The editors in England, dominated by fears of disaster in the global war, allowed their own prejudices free rein.

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[155] Price, *Dispatches*, 133-134.
[156] Price, *Dispatches*, 136, 140.
[157] Price, *Dispatches*, 134-135.

When it came to the Russian Revolution, the conservative British press was in many ways very similar to the British government in its response. Both were highly vocal and opinionated, while at the same time highly under-informed about the actual conditions on the ground. Both were blinded to the reality of the Russian Revolution by a combination of fear of the world military situation and a set of assumptions which assuaged those fears. And, both the British press and the British government proved ultimately unable to truly influence the outcome of events within Russia, except in regards to poisoning East-West relations from 1918 on.

It is possible, that a properly planned, organized, motivated and led campaign of intervention could have succeeded in overthrowing the Bolsheviks and securing Russia for the Whites, for a time. What would have come of a White Russian/Allied victory and whether or not that would have been better or worse for Russia, the Russian people and Russian-Western relations is beyond the purview of this paper. However, as it turned out, Britain and its allies lacked the will and/or the ability to carry out the intervention in a successful manner. Instead, what transpired was a half-hearted, expensive and embarrassing blood-letting which truly only succeeded in expending yet more Allied blood and wealth and in hardening the Soviet leadership against the West.

Following so closely after the end of the so-called "War to end all Wars," it is not truly surprising that the Allied governments were so unwilling to incur even greater loses and sacrifices on an endeavor that would be incredibly hard for their own people to accept. In this way, the conservative British press was like the government. Despite their best efforts, and a lengthy campaign of attacks and brutal coverage, the press was unable to create the will in either the people or the government to follow through with intervention.

What can be seen in the press response to the Russian Revolution and Civil War are the foundations of the Cold War. The fear and paranoia which permeated *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* immediately calls to mind the "Red Scare" and McCarthyism in the minds of modern readers. The image of the Soviets and the Bolsheviks as idealistic, naive social reformers at best, and murderous, anti-democratic monsters at worst certainly seems to have impacted the way the West saw the Soviet Union. The British press not only shaped attitudes in the Western world but attitudes within Russia as well. British papers were available within Russia and, as Price's dispatches and Wilton's expulsion have shown, the Bolsheviks and others within the Soviet system disapproved of the way they were portrayed by the press. Most of the British press, like the British government, failed to truly appreciate the staying power and the potential of the Bolsheviks and the Soviet. They failed to understand the need the Russian people had for peace, land, and bread and their willingness to fight for it. This failure led to their advocacy of intervention, which ultimately drove an almost irreconcilable wedge between the new Soviet state and the Western democracies. The contribution to that divide was the true legacy of the British press and the Russian Civil War.

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